

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
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S E C R E T STATE 153885

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, SY, JO, SA

SUBJECT:REPORT OF SYRIAN-JORDANIAN-SAUDI AIR DEFENSE
WARNING SYSTEM

REF: DAMASCUS 3269

1. THE SAUDIS AND JORDANIANS BOTH DISPLAY CONCERN ABOUT
ISRAELI INTRUSIONS INTO THEIR AIR SPACE. THE SAUDI AND
JORDANIAN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS, FURTHERMORE, HAVE SOME
COMMONALITY OF US-SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT. ACCORDINGLY, AS
REPORTED BY THE DEFENSE ATTACHE IN AMMAN, OFFICIALS IN
RIYADH AND AMMAN HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITY OF
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COORDINATING THEIR AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS TO DETECT ISRAELI
INTRUSIONS INTO SOUTHERN JORDAN AND NORTHERN SAUDI ARABIA.

2. ISRAELI AIR INCURSIONS OVER JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA
HAVE BEEN A CONTINUING SOURCE OF IRRITATION OVER THE LAST
FEW YEARS. ISRAELI AIRCRAFT HAVE FLOWN AS FAR AS AMMAN AND
OVER THE TABUK REGION OF SAUDI ARABIA AS WELL. WITH SOME

FREQUENCY, THEY ALSO VIOLATE SAUDI BORDER AREAS ALONG THE GULF OF AQABA. SAUDI-JORDANIAN RADAR COVERAGE ALONG THEIR JOINT BORDER HAS BEEN POOR, AND AIR DEFENSE COORDINATION MAY BE AN ATTEMPT TO DETECT AND VERIFY THE NATIONALITY OF AIRCRAFT THAT INTRUDE INTO THE AREA.

3. SPECULATION IN NEWSWEEK INTERNATIONAL ABOUT TRIPARTITE AIR DEFENSE TALKS INCLUDING THE SYRIANS SEEMS TO HINGE UPON THE ASSUMPTION THAT DAMASCUS AND AMMAN HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS IN COORDINATING BILATERAL AIR DEFENSE TACTICS AGAINST THE ISRAELIS. WHILE AMMAN MAY INDEED BE IN THE PROCESS OF SUPPLEMENTING BILATERAL JORDANIAN-SYRIAN AIR DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH SEPARATE BILATERAL LINKS WITH RIYADH, WE CANNOT CONFIRM THAT THE THREE PARTIES ARE FORMULATING AN OVERALL AIR DEFENSE PLAN AS SUGGESTED BY NEWSWEEK. NEWSOM

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